

NOBLE CALEDONIA

HOLY GANGES

A river journey through the cultural
heart of India aboard the **RV Rajmahal**

11th to 26th September 2020

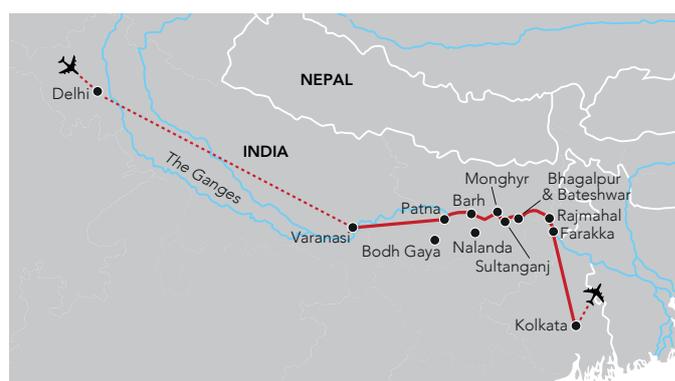


Join us as we venture along India's most sacred of rivers. No river in the world plays a more important cultural, economic or social role in the lives of more people than the Ganges – it is the spiritual heart of Hinduism, strewn with cities, pilgrimage sites, mountains and forests. A river journey allows the traveller to slowly absorb the sights and everyday life that is just not possible by any other means of travel and this is particularly true of the Ganges. Its banks offer an ever-changing colourful scene and a fascinating glimpse of India, from the enchanting rural landscapes to the bustling towns and cities.

Anyone who travels regularly to India will tell you that moving around on land can often be frustratingly slow. Our journey aboard the stylish RV Rajmahal alleviates much of this stress as so much of what we will see and do can be approached from the banks of the river. Romantic notions and modern travel are often a difficult marriage, but a Ganges journey is one of the few trips that can still inspire and be a genuinely moving experience whether you are watching a torrent of pilgrims and holy men wading into the river, reflecting on the history of the Raj and its ever-present monuments, or simply observing fishermen and locals going about their business in their tiny boats.

OUR VIEW

"The Ganges River is often described as the lifeline of India and our September sailing, timed for when the river truly becomes navigable for a journey of this sort, will provide the genuine traveller with a front-row seat along this sacred river bank where every aspect of life can be observed. When we add to this time in Delhi; a city that offers thousands of years of history, culture and architecture; Varanasi and Bodh Gaya with their essential religious and learned associations and Kolkata, the gateway to the British Empire's jewel in India's crown, it makes for a truly inspiring journey that offers not only some of the most fascinating and remarkable aspects of this region, but of India as a whole. With expert, highly experienced guides and luxurious accommodation both onshore and aboard the custom-designed RV Rajmahal, the region's lively and colourful vistas, tastes, sights and sounds cannot fail to deliver a memorable and rewarding experience."
Julian Hartley – Product Manager



THE ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Delhi, India. Fly by scheduled flight from London to Delhi.

Day 2 Delhi. Arrive this morning and transfer to our hotel for a three night stay. After lunch at the hotel, the remainder of the day is free to relax and explore independently. Dinner will also be at our hotel this evening.

Day 3 Delhi. We will have the morning at leisure before heading off for an afternoon tour of both Old and New Delhi. Highlights will include the Red Fort, the residence of Delhi's Maharajas for over 200 years, Jama Masjid, one of the largest mosques in India, and a rickshaw ride in Old Delhi's lively market area. Return to our hotel where dinner will be served this evening.

Day 4 Delhi. Enjoy a morning at leisure before we will continue our exploration of Delhi. After lunch at a local restaurant, our visits will include Humanyun Tomb, which many describe as the precursor to the Taj Mahal, the UNESCO World Heritage Site Qutub complex with its remarkable minaret, Qutub Minar, and passing sites such as The Presidential Palace and Parliament House. Dinner will be at our hotel this evening.

Day 5 Delhi to Varanasi. After breakfast we will transfer to Delhi airport for our flight to Varanasi, also known as Benares and regarded by many as one of the most important pilgrimage sites in India. We will check in to our hotel before enjoying lunch at a local restaurant. This afternoon we will take a rickshaw ride through the colourful and lively streets of Varanasi before continuing to the Ghats of the Ganges to witness an evening Aarti, a Hindu ritual of worship.

Day 6 Varanasi. We will wake early today and head by boat along the bathing ghats of the river. It is at sunrise when the Hindu faithful gather at the river to cleanse themselves of their sins, Varanasi's significance being its association to the Hindu cycle of rebirth. We will also see the cremation ghats, where many Hindus choose to end their lives, and visit what is believed by many to be the most spectacular of the river's ghats, Dashashwamedh. After lunch at the hotel, we will continue on to Sarnath, famous for being the city where Buddha gave his first sermon after attaining enlightenment. Dinner tonight will be at our hotel.

Day 7 Varanasi to Bodh Gaya. After breakfast we will drive to Bodh Gaya



(6 hours approx.) enjoying lunch on route. Following our arrival, we will check in to our hotel and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure, with dinner at our hotel this evening.

Day 8 Bodh Gaya to Patna.

After breakfast we will visit the Mahabodhi Temple, most famous for encircling the Bodhi Tree where Buddha sat and first attained enlightenment. We will also visit the Great Buddha Statue, carved from sandstone and red granite and instated by the 15th Dalai Lama in 1989. We will then enjoy lunch in a local restaurant before continuing our journey to Patna (3.5 hours drive approx.) where we will embark the RV Rajmahal. Enjoy a welcome dinner on board this evening.

Day 9 Patna to Barh. This morning we take a tour of Patna, visiting the 18th century Gola Ghar granary, the great Sikh gurdwara and the rich collections of the State Museum. Return to our ship and pass near the old East India Company opium warehouses as we cruise downstream, mooring for the evening at Barh.

Day 10 Nalanda. Today we will visit Nalanda. Having recently been awarded UNESCO World Heritage status, our visit will include the excavated great Buddhist monastery and stupa along with its adjoining museum. Nalanda is also the world's oldest seat of learning, at its height welcoming over 10,000 students. Later, visit the marbled Pawapuri Jain temple

in the middle of a lake. We rejoin our ship at the great bridge in Mokameh where the naturalist Jim Corbett spent his working life overseeing the ferry crossing.

Day 11 Monghyr to Sultanganj.

Today we sail down to Monghyr. Monghyr possesses a fine Mughal fort as well as an East India Company Cemetery, now with villagers living amongst the tombs. We will also visit Phippahar Hill, crowned by a fine old mansion as well as the Sitakund hot springs, before continuing our cruise downstream to anchor near Jahangira Island at Sultanganj, a place of pilgrimage with early Hindu carvings in the rock.

Day 12 Bhagalpur & Bateshwar.

This morning we will sail to Bhagalpur, a centre of silk production. Here, we will visit the elegant 18th century mansion built by Augustus Cleveland as well as a silk-weaving village. We sail on passing close to the island shrine at Colganj, with both Buddhist and Hindu cave temples and once a centre of the murderous Thug sect. Close by is idyllic Bateshwar where we will pause to view its 6th century Hindu carvings and the nearby ruins of a Buddhist stupa. We anchor for the night near the confluence of the Kosi River.

Day 13 Rajmahal to Farakka.

We continue our sailing towards Rajmahal, beneath the Rajmahal Hills. As with so many other places in India, Rajmahal features in no guidebook, yet offers both

interest and atmosphere. It was once known as Akbarnagar, the town having been founded by the Mughal Emperor Akbar as his eastern capital. Shah Jahan, who commissioned the Taj Mahal, spent much of his youth here. There are remains of palaces, forts and mosques submerged in vegetation which we will explore before continuing to the Farakka Barrage.

Day 14 Farakka to Kolkata.

After breakfast aboard our vessel, disembark and continue to Farakka train station for our journey to Kolkata, arriving at Howarah railway station adjacent to the gravity-defying Howarah bridge. On arrival we will enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before transferring to our hotel for a two night stay. Dinner will be at our hotel this evening.

Day 15 Kolkata. After breakfast, we will head out to explore Kolkata, capital of British India and the proud intellectual capital of the country. We will visit Victoria Memorial, giving a fascinating insight into the British East India Company's rule in India and what many believe to be the most British monument found anywhere on foreign soil. We will also visit St Paul's Cathedral and take in colonial Kolkata before having lunch at a local restaurant. The remainder of the day will be at leisure before meeting for our final dinner at the hotel this evening.

Day 16 Kolkata to London.

Transfer to the airport this morning for your scheduled indirect flight to London. Arrive this evening.

PRICES PER PERSON

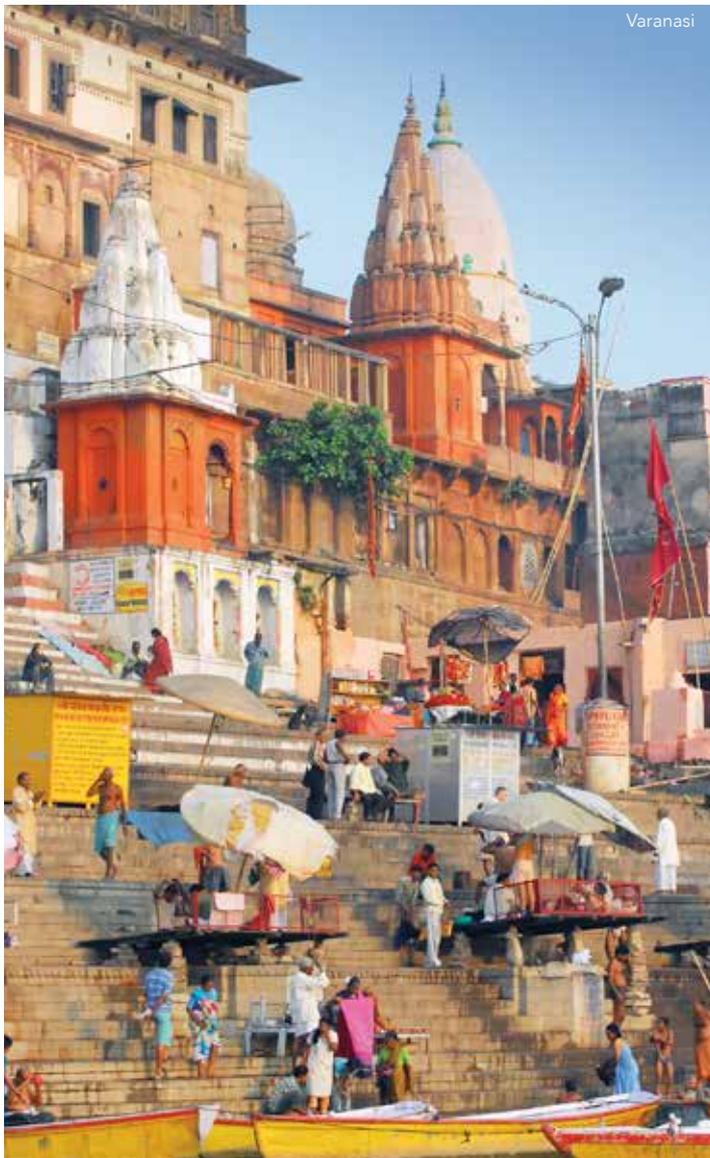
Based on double occupancy

Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price
1	Main Deck Twin/Double	£5295
2	Upper Deck Twin/Double	£5495
3	Main Deck Single	£5295

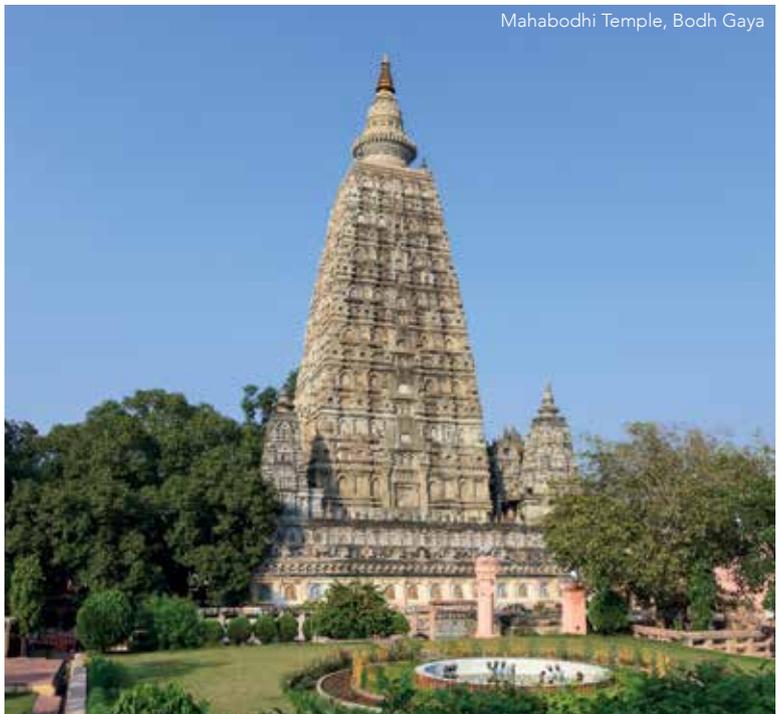
PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • Three nights hotel accommodation in Delhi with breakfast • Two nights hotel accommodation in Varanasi with breakfast • Overnight hotel accommodation in Bodh Gaya with breakfast • Six nights aboard the RV Rajmahal on full board basis • Two nights hotel accommodation in Kolkata with breakfast • Shore excursions • Noble Caledonia Tour Manager • All lunches & dinners including local wine, beer & soft drinks • Gratuities • Transfers • Port taxes • UK airport taxes.

Not Included: Travel insurance, Indian visa, camera fees.

Please note: The consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited in the state of Bihar and so alcoholic drinks will not be served on board or ashore between days 7 & 13.



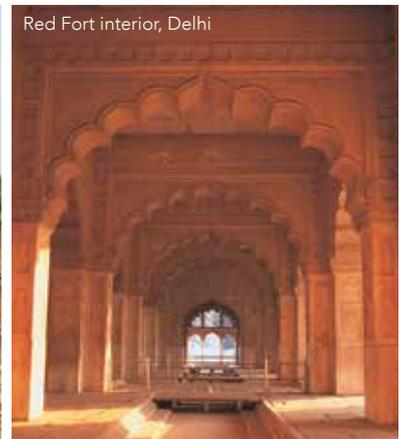
Varanasi



Mahabodhi Temple, Bodhi Gaya



Nalanda



Red Fort interior, Delhi

PRE-CRUISE AGRA EXTENSION - 8th to 12th September 2020

Taj Mahal



For those wishing to extend their time in India we are offering three night stay before the cruise including two visits to the beautiful Taj Mahal, the exquisite marble structure that was built by Shah Jahan as a memorial to his third wife.

THE ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Delhi, India. Fly by scheduled flight.

Day 2 Delhi. Arrive in the morning and transfer to the hotel for an overnight stay. After lunch at the hotel, the remainder of the day is free to relax and explore independently. Dinner will be served at our hotel this evening.

Day 3 Delhi to Agra. After breakfast we will travel to Agra (3.5 hours approx.) where, upon arrival, we will check in to our hotel before heading out for lunch in a local restaurant. We will then proceed to the architectural masterpiece that is the Taj Mahal to enjoy the first of our two visits here. This afternoon's visit at sunset, often said to be most romantic time to witness the extraordinary hues that reflect against the building, will be a perfect introduction to the world's most famous building constructed in the name of love. Dinner tonight will be at a local restaurant.

Day 4 Agra. After breakfast at our hotel we will first visit Mehtab Bagh, otherwise known as the Garden of the Moon Light, encompassing 25 acres and boasting a large pool that reflects the image

of the Taj Mahal. Continue on to visit Itimad-ud-Daulah, better known as the 'Baby Taj' and famous for its marble lattice structures. After lunch in a local restaurant we will visit Agra Fort which incorporates some spectacular and ingenious architecture of its own. Return to the hotel for dinner this evening.

Day 5 Agra to Delhi. We will wake early this morning for our second visit to the Taj Mahal. No two visits of the Taj Mahal are said to be the same and the experience of being here at the start of a day will bring new discoveries. After breakfast in the hotel we will return to Delhi, arriving back in time for lunch. Continue as per day 2 of the main tour programme.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Twin: **£745** Single: **£995**

Price Includes: Overnight hotel accommodation in Delhi with breakfast, two nights hotel accommodation in Agra on full board basis, excursions, gratuities, all lunches & dinners including local wine, beer & soft drinks, entrances fees, guides, transfers.

Not Included: Travel insurance, Indian visa.



RV RAJMAHAL

For our voyage along the Ganges we have chartered the RV Rajmahal from our associates Assam Bengal Navigation with whom we have worked for many years. The vessel was specially designed for the navigational conditions of the Ganges. The Assam Bengal Navigation company is an Indian/British joint venture based in Guwahati and its directors have a wealth of experience in operating river vessels in India.

Category 1 Main Deck Double Cabin



Your Cabin

There are 22 elegantly furnished cabins on board the vessel all of which benefit from climate control and floor-to-ceiling glass doors that open out onto French Balconies. All cabins feature built-in wardrobes with hanging and shelf space, under-bed storage, electronic safe, inter-cabin telephone, dressing gown and slippers. The twin/double cabins measure 18 square metres and the single cabins measure 15 square metres. Bathrooms have en-suite facilities, shaver sockets, hairdryer and a selection of boutique toiletries. In each cabin there is a mini-bar, tea and coffee making facilities and mineral water which is replenished daily. The cabins

also feature two comfortable rattan armchairs which are well-placed for admiring the passing scenery.

Your Space

Spread over three decks, the ship features a number of public areas and facilities that will ensure you remain very comfortable and relaxed throughout your journey. There is a lounge and bar which includes a small library; a spa offering various treatments, and a small gift shop offering practical items and some souvenirs. There is also a large Sun Deck with its own seating area with shade from where you may relax and observe life along the banks of the river. The ship's restaurant seats all passengers in one sitting.



Lounge



The Restaurant



Sun Deck



Category 2 Upper Deck Twin Cabin

Your Dining

Meals are taken in the vessel's single-sitting restaurant located on the vessel's Main Deck. The restaurant seats all passengers in an open seat arrangement and the food reflects the flavours of the region, whilst also offering some western dishes. Breakfast and lunch feature a full buffet with both western and Indian delicacies being offered including vegetarian options. Dinner is served to your table and the restaurant team takes great pride in showcasing wonderful dishes from the region.

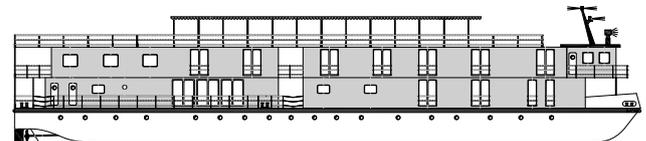
is enforced, we recommend comfortable and casual attire for shore excursions during the day and something a little dressier for evening meals. Whilst sailing you can relax on the Sun Deck and take in your surroundings and in the evenings, enjoy a drink in the lounge catching up on the day's events with your fellow travellers.



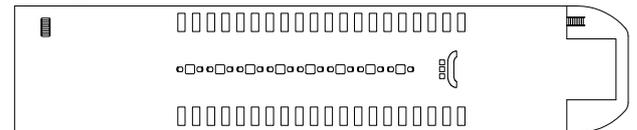
The Bridge

Life On Board

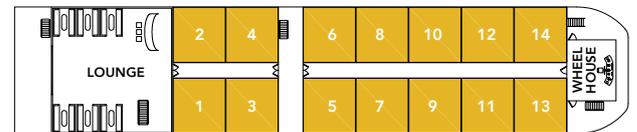
The ship is comfortable and the atmosphere on board informal. The friendly crew will do their utmost to ensure your stay is enjoyable, informative and agreeable throughout. While no dress code



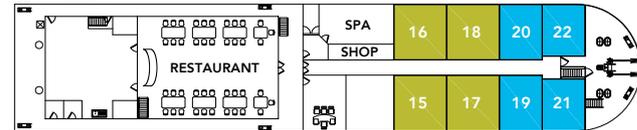
SUN DECK



UPPER DECK



MAIN DECK



■ CATEGORY 1
 ■ CATEGORY 2
 ■ CATEGORY 3

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All special offers are subject to availability. Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.
 Cover image: RV Rajmahal sailing on the Ganges.